

TOPIC 1

The nature of business and management research



Introduction to the research process

Things to consider

- ▶ Realities and pitfalls of research
- ▶ Approaches, strategies and methods
- ▶ Techniques and procedures for data collection and analysis
- ▶ Appropriate use of information technology



Terminology

Methods -

The techniques and procedures used to obtain data

Methodology -

The theory of how research should be undertaken

Saunders *et al.* (2009)



The nature of research

Definition:

‘Something that people undertake in order to find things out in a systematic way, thereby increasing their knowledge’

Saunders *et al.* (2009)

Characteristics:

- ▶ Data are collected systematically
 - ▶ Data are interpreted systematically
 - ▶ There is a clear purpose to find things out
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Features of business and management research

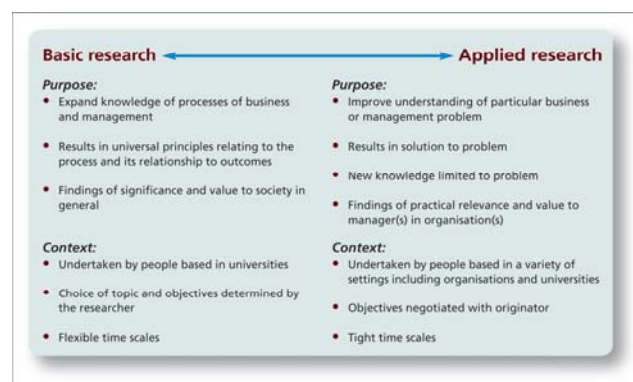
- ▶ Managers draw on knowledge from other disciplines
- ▶ Managers are more likely to allow access if they see commercial or personal advantage
- ▶ Managers now tend to be as educated as the researchers
- ▶ Managers require research to have some practical consequence

Easterby-Smith *et al.* (2008)



Features of business and management research

Basic and applied research



Sources:

Saunders *et al.* (2009); Easterby-Smith *et al.* (2008); Hedrick *et al.* (1993)



The research process

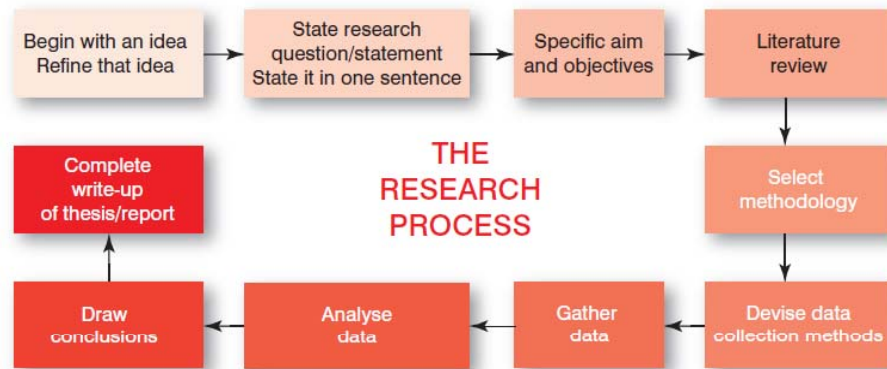


Figure 1.1 The research process

Sources: Quinlan (2012)

The Four Frameworks Approach

The four frameworks approach is an approach to carrying out research whereby the researcher uses four frameworks,

- ▶ the conceptual framework,
- ▶ the theoretical framework,
- ▶ the methodological framework
- ▶ and the analytical framework,

to develop the research project.

The first framework, the conceptual framework, shapes, supports and directs the other three frameworks.

The Four Frameworks Approach to the Research Process

First Framework: The conceptual framework is contained in the research statement, question or hypothesis developed by the researcher for the research project.

Second Framework: The theoretical framework is contained in the literature review.

Third Framework: The methodological framework details how the research was conducted. It is contained in the methodology section of the research report or thesis.

Fourth Framework: The analytical framework is the structure of the detailed analysis of the data presented in the report or thesis.



Model of the Four Frameworks

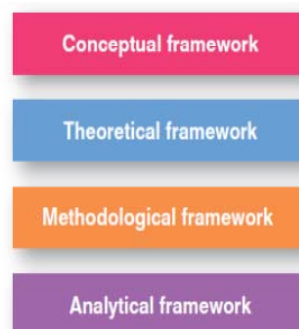


Figure 1.2 The four frameworks

Sources: Quinlan (2012)



The Conceptual Framework – contained in the research statement/question

Once you have decided on your topic for your research project it is a good discipline to be able to express this idea in a clear fashion through the conceptual framework for the research project.

All of the key concepts in the research project should be included in this conceptualisation of one's work.

Secondary Data → Conceptual Framework →
Methodological Framework → Primary Data



The Conceptual Framework – as the linchpin between secondary and primary data

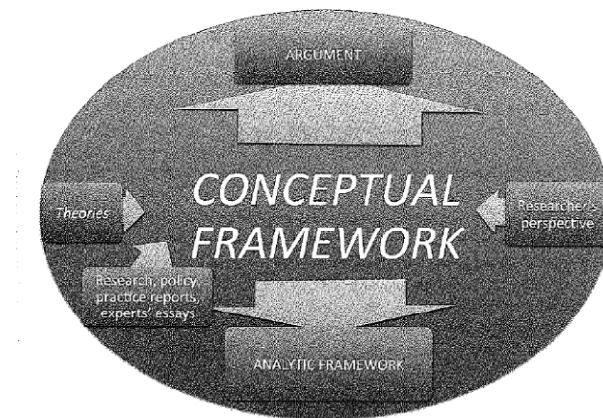


FIGURE 5.1. Conceptual and analytic frameworks.

Sources: Rallis & Rossmann (2012)



The Theoretical Framework

All academic researchers undertake a review of the literature in the field of their study.

They do this in order to assess the state of knowledge in the field, and to identify any gaps in knowledge in the field.

They also do this in order to develop their own expertise in the area or field of their research.

In writing a review of the literature, the researcher constructs a theoretical framework for the research they are carrying out.



The Methodological Framework

- ▶ The Research Methodology is the way in which the research is going to be conducted.
 - ▶ Together with the Conceptual Framework, the research methodology chosen for the research provides the philosophical underpinning(s) for the research project.
 - ▶ **This selection is not made arbitrarily.**
 - ▶ Decisions around methodology are made with reference to the aim and objectives of the research project, with reference to the population of the research and the sample of the population, with reference to the kinds of data needed for the research project and with reference to how best to gather that data.
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Cont.

- When undertaking a research project, each researcher selects a methodology for their research. This selection is not made arbitrarily.
 - The methodology selected should be the appropriate methodology for the research project.
 - Decisions around methodology are made with reference to the aim and objectives of the research project, with reference to the population of the research and the sample of the population, with reference to the kinds of data needed for the research project and with reference to how best to gather that data.
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The Analytical Framework

- ▶ The final framework is the analytical framework.
 - ▶ This framework contains all of the analysis carried out for the research that is to be presented in the written account of the research project.
 - ▶ The researcher is guided in the work of carrying out and presenting the data analysis for the research project by the conceptual framework and the theoretical framework constructed for the research project.
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The research process (2)

Factors to consider

- ▶ The impact of your personal feelings and beliefs
- ▶ Access to data
- ▶ Time and other resources
- ▶ Validity and reliability of the data
- ▶ Ethical issues



And finally...

“there is no one best way for undertaking all research”

Saunders et al. (2009)